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Viewing cable 03ANKARA1516, TURKISH CIVIC SOCIETY: VERDICT SUSPENDED IN CASE

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#03ANKARA1516**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
03ANKARA1516	2003-03-11 09:17	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Ankara

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.taraf.com.tr/haber/abd-belgelerinde-fethullah-gulen.htm>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001516

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/11/2008

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#) [OSCE](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH CIVIC SOCIETY: VERDICT SUSPENDED IN CASE
AGAINST ISLAMIC LEADER FETHULLAH GULEN

(U) Classified by Polcouns John Kunstadter; reasons 1.5 (b,d).

1. (U) An Ankara State Security Court (SSC) March 10 ruled unanimously to postpone a verdict in the trial in absentia of controversial Islamic philosopher Fetullah Gulen. Gulen, indicted in 2000, faced five to 10 years imprisonment under the Anti-Terror Law on charges of establishing an illegal organization for the purpose of undermining the State and establishing Islamist rule. Under the ruling, the case against Gulen will be formally closed if he does not commit another felony crime within five years. If Gulen is charged with another crime during that period, the SSC could reactivate this case and issue a verdict.

2. (C) Gulen attorney Hasan Gunaydin speculated that the SSC postponed the verdict because the evidence in the case was not strong enough to justify a conviction. He told Emboffs that he and his colleagues are seeking a full acquittal in the case, and have filed an objection to the ruling. If the SSC refuses to revise its ruling, Gunaydin said he will file an appeal. He did not know whether Gulen, who now resides in the U.S., plans to return to Turkey as a result of the ruling.

3. (C) Gulen, much more militant when he began in the early 1970's, is the spiritual leader of an Islamic movement that officially professes to be interested in ecumenical understanding but whose roots are intensely Islamic. The movement works in the manner of other Islamic tarikats (brotherhoods) but is relatively more hierarchical and

disciplined. Gulen and his followers have contacts with, and have received public support from, a varied range of Turkish politicians, including former President Demirel and arch-secularist-nationalist former P.M. Ecevit. Gulen has warm relations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope John Paul II. His followers have the reputation of being truer to their word in dealings with people of other faiths than their main rivals (Islamist former P.M. Necmettin Erbakan's Milli Gorus (National View) movement and some elements of the Nakshibendi tarikats, both of whom form the core of now-ruling AK Party), for whom lying in the service of their faith in dealings with non-Muslims is meritorious in Allah's sight ("sevap"). The Gulen movement's wide network of secondary schools, universities, media outlets, business associations, and other holdings in 35 countries was originally encouraged by the GOT, especially the MFA and intel services, but the Kemalist State, especially the Turkish military, defined the Gulenists as an Islamist threat in the wake of the military's 1997 "post-modern" coup against Erbakan's Islamist government.

14. (C) Comment: Gulen's harassment by the State appears to us to be based on an unclear and arbitrarily-interpreted range of evidence, although in our experience the movement in Turkey has become secretive under the State's pressure, its representatives are cagier with us, and its goals are therefore more difficult to read. In addition, we have experience that more militant Islamists have moved into some of the Gulen structures in Turkey. Yet based on extensive and continuing contacts with Gulenists, we conclude that Gulen's approach is so gradualist, and his chief lieutenants are so wary of being tarred as militants, that the movement does not pose a clear and present danger to the State.
PEARSON